

io8 COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S
HISTORY

sion.¹ In explaining the history of the recoinage of 1696 Macaulay cites Dryden's letter to his publisher when Tonson tried to pay him in clipped money.² Naturally the publication of the Hind and the Panther affords an opportunity to criticise the poem as well as to show its connection with the controversy then in progress between Catholics and Protestants, and Macaulay skilfully shows how the language of the poet reflects the change which was then taking place in the policy of the King.³ The non-political works of Dryden are applied to political purposes. Lines from Cymon and Iphigenia exhibit the contempt which the sycophants of James II expressed for the militia, * in peace a charge, in war a weak defence'.⁴

The dedication of Dryden's Arthur serves to show that by 1690 the war between England and France had become a national war instead of a dynastic quarrel.⁵ Dryden's interpolations in his version of the Canterbury Tales are pointed out in order to explain that the doctrine of the indefeasibility of hereditary succession was a seventeenth century superstition⁶ unknown in Chaucer's time, and his play on Aurengzebe is employed to prove conclusively that Englishmen of that time knew nothing about India.⁷

There are many other literary references. Macaulay does not rigidly limit himself to

contemporary authors :
 he quotes eighteenth-century literature as
 well, either to
 explain or to illustrate the question he is
 discussing, or
 simply to interest his readers. On ten or more
 occasions he
 mentions the writings of Addison. When
 describing the
 election of 1685 at Chester and, in
 particular, the singing

*III, 1333-4 (xi).

» II, 853-4 (vii).

⁵ IV, 1904 (xvi).

⁷ V, 2093 (xviii).

*V, 2568 (xxi).

* I, 283 (iii).

⁶IV, 1708, n. 2 (xiv).